



Italian Language and Culture Course Through

Fashion

From the Roman Empire to Modernity... Italian Style

What is 'Italian style,' and why does it attract us? Breathtakingly vast, the world of Italian fashion has a rich history, with roots reaching into antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. This class offers a vivid, exciting journey through the history of Italian dress, style, and identity.

With the help of artistic masterpieces, films, photography, advertising, magazines, and fascinating historical documents, we will explore concepts like luxury, fantasy, identity, masculinity and femininity, self-fashioning and self-expression, consumption, visibility, and desire. From the toga to the creations of Fashion Week, we will also develop a vocabulary with which to talk about dress and design in Italian.

Placing dress in context, this class offers a nuanced and lively overview of Italian history and heritage. Italy, we shall discover, has always been remarkably good at fashioning itself on an international stage.

This course will be held at the Italian Cultural Institute on Wednesdays and will have the following schedule:

February: 15 - 22 - 29

March: 7 - 14 - 28

April: 4 - 11 - 18 - 25

Every class will take place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and materials will be provided. To register, please print and fill out the application form (be aware that personal data and contact details must be complete and correct), sign it and send it together with a \$390.00 check payable to "Friends of Italian Cultural Institute of New York Foundation" to:

*Italian Language and Culture Course Through Fashion,
Friends of Italian Cultural Institute
of New York Foundation,
686 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10065*

Please, also send a confirmation email to the following address: lang.iicnewyork@esteri.it

Subject: "Fashion Course"

The language of instruction is English. The class will have a maximum of 20 students and a minimum of 10: the check will only be cashed if the course reaches the minimum enrollment required, otherwise it will be sent back.

The registration is on a first-come, first-served basis and is due by February, 15th 2012.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

CLASS 1 - 2: FOUNDATIONS OF FASHION (AND ITS DISCONTENTS)

We begin with the social meanings of dress in the Roman Empire and the growth of textile technologies and trade in the Middle Ages. We also explore rhetoric against fashion and ornamentation - particularly that of women - as deceptive and false.

Images of Roman statuary and medieval illuminated manuscripts.

CLASS 3 - 4: RENAISSANCE AND EARLY MODERN SELF-FASHIONING

We next turn to Renaissance ideas of nonchalance and

composure (sprezzatura), as we contrast the fashion freedoms and trendsetting of the courtly lady and the courtesan with the patriarchal uses of female dress and sumptuary laws controlling luxury and expression.

Images from Renaissance portraiture and costume books.

CLASS 5 - 6: DEFINING DRESS AND NATIONHOOD

How does Italy use dress to define italianità after the unification? We explore fashion from the Risorgimento to the war years, with special interest in futurist manifestos on dress and fascist concepts of clothing, language, and models of masculinity and femininity.

Images from Bellezza. Film clips from the Archivio Storico Luce.

CLASS 7 - 8: STAGING ITALIAN STYLE

This week we ask how media, film, photography and stagecraft gave rise to an internationally recognized "Italian style." We begin with the end of WWII and trace the Italian reputation for alta moda (haute couture) and ready-to-wear garments, from the Fontana Sisters to Valentino.

Images and documents from Women's Wear Daily, Vogue Italia, and Bellezza. Clips from runway shows, La Dolce Vita (Fellini), American Gigolo (Schrader), Blow-Up (Antonioni), and Valentino: The Last Emperor (Tyrnauer).

CLASS 9 - 10: NEW TEXTURES: ART, ADVENTURE, AND GLOBALIZATION

Finally, we turn to ultra-modern dress, the relationship between fashion, food, architecture, and art, and, finally, marketing and the questions about identity, tradition, and authenticity raised by globalization.

Images from marketing campaigns. Clips from Gomorrah (Garrone) and extensive clips from I Am Love (Guadagnino, costumes by Oscar-nominated Antonella Cannarozzi).

Jessica Goethals, is a PhD candidate (ABD) in Italian Studies at New York University, where she teaches Italian language, literature, and culture. Specializing in medieval and early modern studies, she is interested in rhetoric, gender, art, and language in the creation of national and individual identities.



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